



# NEWS RELEASE

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

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### Public Health officer recommends face coverings during essential outings



San Bernardino County health officials are recommending people use face coverings when leaving home to conduct essential business such as grocery shopping, going to a medical appointment or visiting a pharmacy to help flatten the curve of Covid-19.

The County made the recommendation after reviewing [guidance released on April 1](#) from the state Department of Public Health.

Face coverings may include coverings that secure to the ears or back of the head and encompass the mouth and nose. Homemade cloth ear loop covers, bandannas and handkerchiefs, and neck gaiters may be used to reduce the spread of Covid-19 particularly among asymptomatic people.

Staying home, practicing social distancing and frequent handwashing are far more effective ways to combat the spread of Covid-19, and face coverings are not a substitute for continuing those practices, said Acting County Public Health Officer Dr. Erin Gustafson.

“Surgical masks and N95 masks should not be used because they must be preserved for healthcare workers and emergency responders,” Gustafson said. “If you do use a face covering, make sure to practice frequent hand washing before and after touching and adjusting the covering.”

Wash cloth face coverings frequently after each use -- at least daily. Place face coverings in a bag until washing them in detergent with hot water and dried on a hot cycle. Discard cloth face coverings that no longer cover the nose and mouth; have stretched out or damaged ties and straps; cannot stay on the face; and have holes or tears in the fabric.

“Covering your face may help reduce the chance that asymptomatic people spread COVID-19. This is not as effective as staying home and practicing social distancing,” said Curt Hagman, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. “We all need to do our part to flatten the curve and residents should use this as one more tool to stop the spread of this disease.”

For more information about Covid-19 in San Bernardino County, please visit [sbccovid19.com](http://sbccovid19.com). The public can also contact the coronavirus public information line from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday at (909) 387-3911, or email the County at [coronavirus@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:coronavirus@dph.sbcounty.gov).